

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #465-2

with

Toso Haseyama (TH)

April 29, 1992

Nu`uanu, O`ahu, Hawai`i

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

[Editor's Note: The interview was conducted in Japanese by Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto and translated by Judith Yamauchi. Only those sections relating to the immediate prewar years, the wartime, and early postwar years are published here.]

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Toso Haseyama at his home in Nu`uanu, O`ahu, Hawai`i on April 29, 1992. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Today, I would like to have you talk to me about Honouliuli. Please tell me about what happened since July 1.

TH: On July 1, (1942), the MP [*military police*] came to get me, and I stayed at the immigration office for three days. In the old days, all the people from Japan, when they first came from Japan, stayed there initially. I was put there and not allowed out.

So after staying there for two or three days, my head became a little strange. In the morning, they let me outside to have breakfast. That was the first time they let me outside. After that I started to feel better.

MK: Why were you taken in on July 1?

TH: In short, I was anti-American and there was a club called the Ogata (*Sonjinka*) where I was in charge of the accounting [i.e., treasurer]. After the war with China started, I (collected donations to help Japan which was then a poor nation and) sent money to Japan in my name. Quite a bit in fact. That record was in the bank and because of that I was investigated. There were probably about sixty members in the group.

At that time I sent about \$10,000. That was at a time when salaries were still low. I used to go to the *inaka* and gather donations from people who had come from Ogata and send them to Japan.

Because of this, I was investigated at the Dillingham Building. I went there three times. The first time I went there, although I waited from morning till afternoon, they wouldn't question me. Then they told me they were busy that day so they wouldn't be able to do it that day and to come the following day.

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So I wasted one day.

In the end, since I was a *teikokujin* [*citizen of Imperial Japan*] they asked me whether [*I wanted*] Japan to win or lose, being that my children were here. Since I had relatives in Japan and grew up in Japan—if I grew up here my thinking might have been different but—in the end I said I didn't want Japan to lose. That was the end [*for me*].

MK: When they did the questioning, who asked you the questions?

TH: The FBI [*Federal Bureau of Investigation*] person. There were the army and the navy and the translator and myself making four people. All four of us sat down and they would question me.

MK: If you had wanted to call your lawyer or friends, could you have?

TH: No, I couldn't at that time. And the next day, they told me to bring my suitcase. They came to get me. The garage was some distance away so I told them I would go leave my car there. But they were reluctant to let me do that. Finally, they okayed it and I took my car to the garage and left it there. Then I went to Honouliuli.

MK: Before this happened, did you know you were going to be taken to Honouliuli?

TH: No, I didn't know about it. I didn't know.

MK: Among your sixty club members, how many had to go?

TH: No one else went. I went by myself.

MK: In December and January, many Japanese were taken away to be interned. At that time, how did you feel about that?

TH: Nothing in particular. I was in business so I was worried about that. I wondered if my business would survive. But even with the war, the economic times were good, so I was able to get along. During the war the Japanese-language newspapers were stopped for a period of time [*i.e., a few weeks, December 1941-January 1942*]. After a little while, it became okay to resume.

Even then, it was able to continue only through checking by the authorities of the newspaper company to make sure no articles were released which would not be for the good of America.

So, whenever I put an ad out, without fail the next day they would contact me. I put them out three or four times, but whenever I did so, the next day they always came.

MK: Did they ask you questions about the ad?

TH: Not about the ad, since that only had to do with the business. They didn't ask about that. Their usual question was along the lines of "Is the emperor of Japan a god?"

But the old-timers then did feel that the emperor was something like a god. But I didn't feel that way. The old-timers in those days, such as my parents, did feel that the emperor was a god. They asked foolish questions like that.

Or things like whether or not I had bought war bonds. Or silly things like whether I had relatives in Japan or not.

MK: When they asked whether or not you had bought war bonds, had you bought any?

TH: Yes, during the war I had bought them. Most of the Japanese during the war would buy war bonds.

MK: Had you bought them because you were scared?

TH: No, I had already bought them. I bought them before the war started.

MK: Before the war started, did you feel that a war was imminent?

TH: No, I didn't know. At that time, (there were high-level discussions between Japan and the United States in) Washington [*D.C.*], but I didn't feel there would be a war. It wouldn't do us any good to worry about it, would it? Although ultimately it turned out that way.

After the war started, because I was an alien, from six o'clock on, I couldn't go out. [*Aliens were not allowed outdoors during blackout.*] And as I mentioned, I couldn't keep more than \$200 cash. And after the war started—although it would have been good if I had become a citizen—since I was an alien, I couldn't buy liquor. That was okay, though, because I didn't drink.

But listening to the talk after the war was over, it seems that, compared with Japan, America was still more comfortable. Things were rougher in Japan. The American niseis who had gone to Japan were imprisoned.

Although there was talk that the Japanese Americans would all be sent off to Moloka`i, in the end, they didn't do that; instead, they got more work. All those Japanese-language teachers and the *kibei* nisei types were all hired to put up the barbed wires. The salaries were fairly good, too. (Laughs)

Although they weren't carpenters, they just had to hammer nails and things. At any rate, in those days, without the Japanese, nothing could be done. So the American government did not send them off to Moloka`i. And, even at that time, there weren't any Japanese around who would do anything wrong. Everyone was frightened because nothing like this had ever happened before.

If it were to happen again, it probably wouldn't be like that. And America

probably wouldn't do such things again—to send people off to such places like California [*Toso Haseyama is referring to relocation camps*]. They certainly wouldn't do such things again.

They didn't do such things [*forcibly relocate en masse*] to the Germans and the Italians. Of course their numbers were fewer too but. . . . But there were a lot of Japanese—there were tens of thousands of them here. They were scared because it was the first time—but if there is another war, this probably won't happen.

MK: After the war started, did you keep your business in your own name?

TH: Yes, I didn't change the name. [*Haseyama Tailor operated under his ownership and name.*]

MK: There are some people who put things into the names of their children or some nisei.

TH: That may have been so, but I didn't do that. I didn't have to.

MK: How did you feel when you were taken to Honouliuli.

TH: There's nothing I could do so about it so I resigned myself to it. I couldn't escape or anything, so I had to do just as they told me to.

MK: Well, you had children and a business. What did you do about them?

TH: As for the children, let's see now—the younger one was nine or ten. The older sister was in junior high. But because I went to Honouliuli—I was gone so my younger sister watched them.

The workers continued just as before. Because I wasn't there, business was not good, but nothing could be done about that. It couldn't be helped and they managed. If that continued much longer, it would have become impossible.

MK: Because you were taken away, how was the relationship of your children with their friends? Did it become a problem that you were taken away?

TH: The older brother was in Maui. So the older sister and the youngest brother were with me as apprentices. Even after I went in there, I could meet with them once a week on Sunday. Everyone in there had wives and children come—a bus would bring them—to Honouliuli once a week. For two hours—at the mess hall there—we would talk. I would receive news of the shop from my younger sister. So once a week—if I needed something I would ask for it and she would bring it to me the following week.

MK: Could you ask her to bring anything?

TH: Yes, practically anything would be okay.

MK: What sorts of things weren't allowed?

TH: There wasn't very much foodstuffs [she could bring], since there was the time factor. [*Foodstuffs were perishable.*] We would make—in monkeypod—various things.

The young people would play mahjongg—from morning till night they would sit there. Since there was lack of exercise, they would say they had bad stomachs, indigestion, etc. But they would still play mahjongg—because there was no work. In one corner, they would play mahjongg.

MK: When you first went to Honouliuli, what sorts of things did you take there in your suitcase?

TH: Only my clothing. Nothing else. I had some cash in my wallet. They confiscated all that. They took it but they returned it when I got out [in February 1943]. When I went in, they gave me shoes and pants and shirts, etc. And if the shoes became worn out, they would be replaced for us. When I got out, even if I could have taken them, I wouldn't want to wear them (laughs) because they were military shoes.

MK: What sort of clothes did you get?

TH: Green khaki pants. That's what they gave us. Two pairs. So I would wash them and when they became worn, they would replace them for us. And if we worked for one day, they would pay us eighty cents. They would give us a coupon for that. When the store in the camp opened, we could use this coupon to buy candy and things.

MK: What sort of work did you do there?

TH: When I first went in, I cleaned the bathrooms. (The bathrooms were inspected to make sure the work was done. The toilets were inspected weekly and had to be cleaned just so.) That would be one day's work. Later, I went to grow vegetables. I would go after eight [A.M.] and come home by ten [A.M.]. That would be one day's work. (I received eighty cents a day in pay. Whatever job I did, I was paid eighty cents. I remember taking care of vegetables, like cabbage, and having to chase away the moths/butterflies. The MPs stood guard to make sure we wouldn't escape. They didn't scold us or really check on our work. While we farmed we could sit and talk and the guards didn't bother.)

MK: When you did this work, were you with an MP?

TH: Yes, he would be watching. So I couldn't escape.

MK: Did those MPs have guns?

TH: Yes, they had guns.

MK: How did you feel about MPs watching you like that?

TH: Nothing in particular. Since this was America, and everything was so easygoing. (Laughs) But that camp was surrounded by barbed wire and MPs were guarding it from a high position. It was lights out at nine P.M. So we had to go to sleep by nine.

MK: And what time did you get up?

TH: About six A.M. At about seven, we would line up at the mess hall and have breakfast. When we came home we would start work—about eight. I say work, but it was a simple thing. The people who worked in the kitchen would have to go earlier and get things ready such as start the coffee, etc. The same thing for lunch—they would go there by eleven and lunch would be at twelve. For dinner also, they would go about five—beforehand—and get things ready. When it was time, they would sound the dinner bell (laughs) and everyone would line up.

MK: How was the food?

TH: It really didn't suit me very well. I really didn't like things like sausages—I didn't eat them. A friend I met there named Okabayashi from Kane`ohe—he has since died—I used to give it all to him. I would take my share, but since I didn't eat it, I gave it all to him.

MK: If you didn't like sausages, what did you eat?

TH: There were other things so I ate those. I never ate the sausages. They often served lamb. There were Japanese there so there was a Japanese cook. He was Japanese so he would cook what Japanese liked. It was pretty good.

MK: So the cooks in the Honouliuli camp prepared Japanese food.

TH: Yes, once in a while they made Japanese food. But usually, since the things came from America, they cooked this. But sausages were simple. All you had to do was tear [*the package*] open.

MK: The people who did the cooking in the camp—were they regular cooks on the outside?

TH: There were people who were regular cooks on the outside. They trained others to cook. So amateurs learned to cook. Among them there was one—he recently died—there was a restaurant called Hananoya [*Tea House*]*—it was run by someone who learned how to cook in this camp. He has died but he used to cook for [*The*] Wisteria [*restaurant*].*

There was a worker who made *kamaboko*. So the people who had had some experience (cooked some things). They would handle the breakfast, lunch, and dinners. There was rice, so there was no worry—because we were Japanese. If it were only bread, you would get tired of it. After the war, I went on a fifty-day tour of America [*U.S. Mainland*]. At that time, toward the end when we went to restaurants, just the smell of bread made me feel full.

If we went to chop suey—whether it was Seattle or New York or Boston—the first thing we would ask was where was the chop suey? Everyone would. Otherwise, if it were just western food, you would get tired of it.

MK: So, at Honouliuli, you had both western-style and Japanese-style foods.

TH: Yes, since the cook was Japanese, he made Japanese-style foods.

MK: Was the person who made *kamaboko* among them?

TH: Yes, he was in there.

MK: Do you remember his name?

TH: They have all died. Ten or fifteen years ago he died.

MK: You were a tailor. At Honouliuli did you do any tailoring?

TH: I didn't do any tailoring after I went in there. There was a tailor there. You could take anything to him, and he would do whatever you asked him to. But I didn't do any after I went there. I only cleaned the toilets and grew vegetables.

Actually, before I went in there, I was thin and my waist measured only twenty-eight [*inches*]. I was under a hundred pounds. But after I went in there, we had a regulated life—such as getting up early and going to bed by nine—when I was here [*at his tailor shop*] I couldn't do such things. I used to work until eleven or twelve. So I was thin. But after I went in there, I gradually gained weight and my waist went from twenty-eight to thirty, then thirty-two, and then thirty-four. I got that fat. So people ought to have a regulated life. Such things as staying up late at night is not good for the body. But some of the *kibei* nisei, because they couldn't move around very much and lacked exercise, had numerous complaints like bad stomachs, indigestion, etc. That couldn't be helped.

MK: If you became ill, was there . . .

TH: If I became ill, I'd report it to the office and they would take me outside to see my own doctors. If I had a toothache or something, I would make an appointment with my own doctor, and the MP would take me downtown in their jeeps to see them.

MK: Who paid for this—for the doctors and dentists?

TH: They would pay for it. People inside couldn't pay it. So, when we were ill, we would tell them and they would take care of it.

MK: So there were jobs to clean the toilets, tend vegetables, cook, etc., but other than that, what sorts of jobs were there?

TH: There weren't any others. Just indoor tasks. There were about six people in a cottage. They had these bunk beds which had an upper and lower part. Every day we took turns cleaning, the mopping and such. That was all. There wasn't any other work.

After this was done, we had free time, so we did whatever we wanted to. Sometimes when boxes came, we would get them and make toys with them—because we had time. We'd make them and, in order to paint them, we would order the paint via the outside visitors who came to see us on Sundays. They would buy it for us and bring it to us the following week. They would also bring us the nails and hammers, etc., which we wanted from the outside.

MK: So you used to make toys.

TH: Yes, because we had time and because there were [*those boxes*]. So we would use them to make [*the toys*]. There was an eye doctor who, at the beginning, didn't do anything, but he also ended up making things—like chopsticks—because there was no other work. So until we went to bed at night, during the afternoons, we would play *shogi* or go, etc.

I used to go learn flower arrangement—because they had flowers there. So when I asked my younger sister for flower arranging tools, she would bring them to me the following Sunday.

MK: About the flowers, were there flowers at Honouliuli?

TH: No, so they would have to be brought to me.

But we could do most things. In order to do flower arranging, they would teach us—since we had free time.

MK: So did someone just say they knew flower arrangement and offer to do it at their place or what?

TH: Yes, they also had free time. It wasn't that money was paid or anything. In order to kill time, we just did things. (Laughs) People who wanted to play mahjongg, played—the same with *shogi* and go.

In order for me to learn go, two of us would sit and a teacher would teach us from the side—(Zenkyo) Komagata-*san* from the Soto sect was on my side and the other side had his own—he was a Kyushu person. (Laughs) So it was like a match. (Laughs) So the teacher would teach me from the side—to do this or that.

MK: Did you have a go set?

TH: It was brought in from the outside—when we ordered it. Those things weren't things which would kill someone such as a pistol or a knife. Those things were allowed in freely and easily. Also the paints and things were easily [*brought in*].

At the time the war started, if one spoon were missing, they would strip the people and check them over. But by this time, those things didn't happen. Hammers and the like were all brought in.

MK: What sorts of people were in Honouliuli?

TH: Mostly *kibei* nisei. Those who were Japanese-language teachers. The reverends were virtually all sent to America, although surprisingly Komagata-san was a reverend but he stayed behind. And out in Waipahu, the Soto-sect reverend—I forgot his name—he was doing anti-American things which affected the young people, but I didn't do anything like that. There were people like that. (There was) a *kibei* nisei and fairly old. He used to do anti-American things. There were young people who would align themselves with him. I didn't do anything like that.

MK: Did it become a problem for *kibei* niseis.

TH: I don't think so. Among them there was—although he was an amateur—before the war, there was one who was famous for his voice. Now he is teaching music in Nu`uanu. He went to Japan and studied a bit and returned and is working.

MK: Was his name Urata-*sensei*?

TH: Yes, [Harry] Urata. He went to Japan and. . . I'm not too sure about the details. But before the war, he was famous for his voice and won a singing contest.

MK: Well, since various issei, *kibei* nisei, and people from Honolulu gathered there, were you able to discuss things?

TH: Yes, we could, but there were only a limited number of people we could meet. There really was no trouble while I was there.

MK: Were you ordered not to talk about certain things—like the war.

TH: No, we weren't. In the camp, the reverends and the older people did talk about anti-American things, but—there wasn't anything. In America—although they said there was damage here in Pearl Harbor—because America was a country with a lot of products and they kept making more, I don't think there was much [*damage elsewhere*]. It was different from Japan.

MK: What about things which were prohibited? Were there any?

TH: After going in there, there weren't any restrictions on our freedom. We just did our work and after that our time was free. We would play *shogi* or go or make toys or whatever—and once a week things like flower arranging, etc. That was all.

MK: You were all right, but were there others who suffered from neuroses and the

like?

TH: No, I don't think so. As opposed to the Mainland, here we were able to meet with [*family*] once a week. For that reason, I don't believe there was any.

As for those sent to America, it was too far for people around here to go there. Here, it would take an hour by bus. So there wasn't any of that. If you went to the continent, it would be several hundred miles away, and you couldn't do that. That's why trouble may have occurred over there.

MK: You were able to get out in eight months. [*Toso Haseyama was released in February 1943.*]

TH: Yes.

MK: Why were you able to get out?

TH: That I don't know. It seems that they had meetings periodically. In short, they probably decided at a meeting that I wasn't particularly anti-American and was just quietly staying there, so that it would probably be all right to let me out. And they let me out.

However, I heard later that if you were Christian, there was a movement by Japanese ministers to let them out. But there were a fair number of people who were Buddhists. As a whole, those kinds of people stayed longer. But, as I said, if you were Christian, the ministers worked to get them out early.

MK: When you say "movement," what sorts of things did they do?

TH: That I don't know. Afterwards, I heard this from a Christian—that if I were a Christian like that person, I would have been let out earlier. That person would have talked to a minister and had the minister talk to the military. But I wasn't [*a Christian*] so . . .

MK: Were there some who became a Christian in order to be let out?

TH: There weren't many Christians. But because of that connection, Christians got out earlier. That's how it seems it was.

MK: People who wanted to get out—was there anything they could do to get out earlier?

TH: Once the people went in, they were resigned to it—because they couldn't do anything about it. But, as I said, if you were a Christian, the minister could put pressure on, but there weren't many Christians there. They were mostly Buddhists.

MK: When it was time for you to get out, who informed you of it?

TH: From the office there was a notice, telling me to get ready by a certain time, and, if I waited, they would take me to the depot.

MK: When you heard you were being released, how did you feel?

TH: Well, naturally, I was happy. Being in there, I couldn't do anything in connection with the outside. It was like being kept in a basket and not allowed out. But, even after I got out, I wouldn't be allowed to do anything anti-American.

MK: Before you got out, you roomed with six people. Do you remember the names of those six?

TH: No, I don't remember anymore. It has been a long time. (Laughs)

MK: How was it living with those six during eight months?

TH: Everyone cooperated so it was okay. When I first entered, everyone was doing things—er, how would you say it—sloppily. After I got there, I put some order to things, assigning tasks to people for certain days and such. Otherwise, everything was all slipshod and nobody did his share. So I went and straightened things out, and, after that, chores were done every day as assigned. Otherwise things went undone.

Finally, when Friday rolled around, the military commander would come—the inspector, that is. A notice had already come—the beds and things were put into order, so that we wouldn't get scolded.

MK: What would happen if things weren't put in order?

TH: I suppose we would get scolded. We never did so I don't know. We always mopped the room and cleaned up and made our own beds. There were mosquito nets since there were mosquitos, and those had to be folded and put away. There were some who left their mosquito nets out all day, and that wouldn't do. They should take those mosquito nets off and fold them and put them in order.

MK: At Honouliuli, did the rooms have windows and screens?

TH: No, they didn't. There was only a door at the front and at the back. That was all.

MK: What about the sides?

TH: The sides were wood. They were wooden barracks. The floors were also wood. Really simple things. So all you had to do was mop the floor and you were through. The room was probably about half the size of the [*ten by twelve feet*] room we are in. With a two-tiered bed.

MK: Weren't there fights or anything with six people living in such a small space?

TH: No, there weren't. Everyone cooperated, so there weren't any.

MK: After it was decided that you would be getting out, what did the other five think?

TH: (Laughs) I don't know what they thought? Of course, I was happy, but I'm sure those left behind couldn't feel too good about it. But the people in there were resigned to being there until the war was over.

I don't know how he was caught, but there was a person from Wakayama-*ken* who was a fisherman—he lived in the South Seas [*i.e., Pacific*—and he was fishing. He was caught and was in there. He certainly was an irresponsible [easygoing] type. He must have thought he would be protected there and when the war was over, he would be let out.

But that didn't hold true for me. I was running a business and. . . . (Laughs) No matter how impatient I was, there was nothing I could do.

MK: Other than you [men], were there any women in Honouliuli at that time?

TH: No, only men were there [*where Toso Haseyama's cabin was located*]. Only men. There was a small river on this side and on the other side—from Saipan—there was a couple who were Japanese-language schoolteachers over there—they had come with their family. (They came as POWs, prisoners of war.)

Before that—I think it was Ni`ihau—there was a [*Yoshio*] Harada—helped the Japanese airplane [*pilot*—he was killed. His wife [*Umeno Harada*] evidently was there. But since she was a woman, she was let out. [*Umeno Harada was finally released in June 1944.*]

There was also a woman who was connected (with a temple). She got out and set up a temple in Honolulu. She had followers and there is a temple. (I heard that.) I have never been there.

MK: After the war?

TH: Yes, after the war was over, she got out and—this woman—she must be intelligent—she has assembled her followers and built this temple.

I've forgotten them. When the war was over, the army civilians from Korea—they used to come over [*i.e., detained at Honouliuli*]. They would come wearing denim pants with bald heads—you couldn't tell the women from the men. Their heads were powdered white and hundreds of them would go in a line up to a camp which was located above us. (They didn't do any work.) After about a week to ten days, they would go out again. (And, another group would come in from the Pacific.) Evidently they were sent to America.

MK: Did you have any contact with them?

TH: No, none at all.

MK: You only watched them?

TH: We only watched them, because their camp was separated from ours. And we didn't try to meet them. We could hear them singing in Korean from their loudspeakers—in Korean. After about a week, they would be sent to the Mainland.

MK: About how many people were in the Honouliuli camp?

TH: When I was there, there must have been about a hundred people. Only about a hundred.

MK: You were able to get out in about eight months. Did the others have to stay longer than eight months?

TH: Oh, yes. Some of them stayed until the war was over. After I got out, I didn't worry about them over there, so I don't know what happened—because I didn't stay until the end. If I had stayed until the end, I would have known, but because I got out part way through . . .

MK: What did the others in Honolulu, such as your friends, think about your being in Honouliuli?

TH: Nothing in particular, I think. Among them there were some who came to order clothes or those who came to the shop to talk. But nothing in particular.

MK: Weren't there some who thought that, because you were an enemy alien who was interned at Honouliuli, they shouldn't have anything to do with you?

TH: There was nothing like that. The Japanese, by the time I got out, realized that Japan was losing the war and—it wasn't like being in Brazil or somewhere—we were close to Japan and could tell [*the outcome*] earlier.

MK: Your children knew that you were in Honouliuli, didn't they?

TH: Yes, they did.

MK: What did your children think about it?

TH: Well, I really don't know. They were just kids so they probably didn't understand it. If they were around twenty or so, they might have thought something about it, but they were only about twelve. They didn't have minds of their own yet.

MK: Now, [*under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988*] the federal government is giving reparations to the internees—the \$20,000 [*and a formal apology*]. Have you put in your name for that, too?

TH: They have a record of it [*Toso Haseyama's internment*], so they [*already*] gave it to me. I sent in an application for it and they gave it to me.

MK: What do you think about the reparations?

TH: Well, after all these years—they say they are going to give us this money—I thought this country called America—it's a great country. They have an accurate record, so after I sent in my application, they sent it to me. It's been two years already [*since Toso Haseyama received his reparation payment*].

MK: This was the U.S. government's way of saying, "I'm sorry."

TH: That's right.

MK: How did you feel when the government said, "I'm sorry."

TH: Nothing in particular—since tens of years have since elapsed already. It was a long time ago. I supposed, if it had happened just after the war within two to three or four to five years, I may have had more feelings about it, but it has been forty or fifty years now.

MK: You have retired now, but do you feel you were wronged?

TH: No, I don't think so. For one thing, the problem was that I am a *teikokujin* so I couldn't do anything and am resigned to it. If I were a citizen or something, I may have felt differently. But that was not the case and I was a *teikokujin* so that was the most important thing.

They say that on August 15, [1945], Japan surrendered. On that day, I was so sad—that Japan had lost. After all, I grew up in Japan, so my Japanese origin remains in my mind. So on that occasion—whereas around here, because they had won, people put tin cans on their automobiles and dragged them noisily around, I was so sad, I just cried and cried. At least on that occasion—other times I'm not like that—but on that occasion—even when my parents died it wasn't that bad—but on that occasion I was devastated. There was nothing that could be done about it.

MK: Were you worried about Japan?

TH: Well, even if I were to worry, there was nothing that could be done about it, so I was resigned to it. Actually if the war had ended on an equal level, that would have been another thing—but Japan surrendered. If I think about it now, it was a wonder that Japan was able to get that far—going around the world to fight—and, with not even enough to eat.

On that point, in 1949 when I went to Japan, I heard that the military lived lavishly, while the citizens tried to do their best with little to eat. So, the higher ups had it good—I guess that's the same in all countries. It's fine for those above but miserable for those below.

MK: After you came out of Honouliuli, the war was still on. How was your business?

TH: Business was not good. It was on the good side, though. After I got out, we were busy so I hired some people—part-timers and such. The regular workers

remained, however. But I hired part-timers and continued the business. That one lady, though, worked straight through the war period.

MK: She worked from home, though.

TH: Yes.

MK: Doing piecework.

TH: Yes, piecework. That person said she worked for me and bought a house.
(Laughs)

MK: Throughout the war, did you still sell the same things?

TH: Yes, because Ala Moana [*Center*] wasn't built yet. So, it was still good. But after that was completed, gradually conditions became [*worse*]. The [*International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union*] stevedores had a strike [*in 1949*], and it lasted a long time [*177 days*]. At that time, business slowed down, and times became hard.

Then, in a short time, the Korean War started [*in 1950*]. Then goods started flowing in from America, and the economic conditions improved.

MK: During the war [*World War II*], there were many soldiers and defense workers. Did these soldiers and defense workers come to your shop?

TH: Our shop did not have any connection with soldiers' uniforms—only with civilian clothes. The Japanese customers were the most numerous.

MK: During the war, when the soldiers came to Hawai`i, they often bought aloha shirts.

TH: Soldiers didn't buy any [*from Toso Haseyama*]; only civilians did. Because it was wartime, economic conditions were fairly good, and people could make a lot of money. We sold a good number of aloha shirts to civilians.

But for things like ready-made pants, after Ala Moana [*Center*] was built, [*sales*] went down a little. But somehow we managed.

MK: During the war, was it difficult to get a hold of fabric?

TH: No . . .

MK: Did the fabric keep rapidly coming in?

TH: Since I bought it from Von-Hamm Young [*Co., Ltd.*], Theo. H. Davies [*and Co.*], American Factors [*Ltd.*], etc., they would bring it over. Then their salesmen would come to my shop to take orders. Not just that, they would cut samples for us. We would show these to our customers and, if we told them these numbers, they would deliver it to us.

MK: Since it was still wartime, and the ships couldn't bring in too many goods, were they still able to bring in fabrics?

TH: Yes, they brought them.

MK: What about the prices for buying the fabrics?

TH: They didn't really change much from before. In those days, there was a ceiling price [*set by the Office of Price Administration*] and they couldn't unreasonably raise the price. So, when we put in our orders, they couldn't exceed this ceiling price.

However, for Filipinos or Koreans or Chinese, etc. because they were not *teikokujin* and not aliens, they would do all sorts of bad things.

During that period, a huge number of Filipino tailors started up. These Filipinos earned a lot of money as defense workers, so they had money and could make lots of clothes. So the number of Filipino tailors grew enormously. But, after the war was over, one by one they dropped out, so that there aren't too many of them left. (Laughs)

MK: As the Filipino tailors were increasing, how was your business?

TH: It had no connection with us. Our customers were virtually all Japanese. There was no change.

MK: During the war there was a curfew whereby people couldn't go out too late at night.

TH: We couldn't go out, so we finished everything during the day before evening.

MK: So before evening you finished all your work and took all your orders, and serviced your customers before the curfew?

TH: Yes. There was the pineapple company (near) us. In the morning that place was full of people—working people. But when people worked at places like that, even if they were aliens, they could work even at night because they had gotten a permit and it was all right for them to work. Since it was such a large enterprise the military would okay it.

MK: Could your business operate late at night?

TH: No, it couldn't. But if we closed the shop, we could do our own thing. But we couldn't open till late.

MK: But how was it when you couldn't work late into the night?

TH: Business was the same as usual. Previously we had opened until nine P.M. but then we had to close by about six in the evening. But, even if we closed, I had to prepare the work for the people working outside on their own [*i.e., those who worked on a piecemeal basis at home*]. So I continued to work

until eleven or twelve at night.

MK: But you couldn't turn on the lights, could you?

TH: It was okay. After the war it was okay.

MK: But didn't you have to black out?

TH: That was during the war, but after the war it was okay.

MK: But, during the war, you had to black out.

TH: Yes, we had to black out. It would have been a big job to cover the whole shop. So we didn't [*cover the whole shop*]. (But, we did black out during the war.)

MK: So, during the war, your business was about the same as before?

TH: Well, compared with before the war, it fell quite a bit. But I somehow managed to meet our expenses.

Before the war, in 1941, we were busy. The economic boom continued in preparation for the war. But, even during the war, the working conditions were good—the business, that is. Actually, our business was not that great, but we made out okay.

If we were in the food industry that would have been better. For them, whether they were military or whoever, they would have all had to. . . . It would have been better to change to that sort of business earlier.

MK: But, during the war, you couldn't keep more than \$200 at a time.

TH: Yes, in cash. You just had to deposit it into the bank. You just couldn't keep cash with you.

MK: You mentioned that you were asked by someone to sew some money into their clothing.

TH: Yes. That was my friend. He asked me to hide it for him. So I took apart the lining and inserted it (in the shoulders) and sewed it back up. But after awhile, he said he needed money, so I had to take it apart again. (Laughs) That sort of thing happened.

There was also a couple who (had a drinking establishment). Because it was before the war, the economic times were very good and they made a lot of money. So, when the war started they secretly hid the bills in his (coat).

(Some people hid money in their trousers), after many years, the bills rotted and faded. But the letters (on the bills) still remained (visible) so the bank exchanged them for (new ones). That's what I heard. That's what they told me. That sort of thing happened.

MK: During the early part of the war, you burned your customers' bills. Did you [ever] get paid for the bills you had burned?

TH: They were the final bills and since I burned them up, I couldn't collect on them at all. If there were another war, I wouldn't do such a thing. Because I burned them all up, there is nothing I can do. It was because the FBI would come to investigate, I got scared and burned them all.

MK: During the war, what about the `A`ala *Rengo* people—were there other members of `A`ala *Rengo* who were interned?

TH: Among `A`ala *Rengo* members, there were [*Taketo*] Iwahara, [*Taichi*] Sato-san, and [*Shigezuchi*] Morikubo. Just those three. There weren't any others.

MK: Do you know why those three were interned?

TH: Well, Sato-san was a Japanese [*leader*], but Iwahara didn't do such things. Morikubo, I don't know any details about him.

MK: What happened to these three after the war?

TH: Whether it was Sato or whoever, they didn't have very many assets in Japan. But Iwahara had a lot of assets in Japan. So that's why that happened to him.

MK: What happened to Iwahara *Shoten*?

TH: That was taken away and sold. [*Takaichi*] Miyamoto-san bought it.

MK: And Miyamoto-san set up a hardware store.

TH: Yes, and he hired someone else to run it for him.

MK: Did that last long?

TH: It was different from before the war, but they did all right without too much hardship.

MK: Do you know the name of the person he hired?

TH: Let me see—I don't have very much of a recollection—that person used to work at [*Theo. H.*] Davies—a person named Murakami used to manage it.

MK: Did they handle hardware straight through?

TH: Yes, they dealt with hardware, but I don't think it was as good as before. And after Murakami there were three or four people, but I've forgotten their names.

MK: What about Morikubo-san?

- TH: Although he went in, he also wasn't there for too long. His wife used to work for Dillingham as a maid. He was married to her and perhaps because of this connection, he may have been let out—but I don't know the details.
- MK: And you knew Iwahara(-*san*), Morikubo-*san* and Sato-*san*—they were all were interned. What did all the `A`ala *Rengo* members do?
- TH: They really couldn't do anything. They all were in business there, so they simply all continued their businesses—there was nothing else they could do. So they didn't do anything in particular.
- MK: Did the remaining family of Iwahara *Shoten* help?
- TH: At Iwahara they couldn't do anything. Everything was frozen after he left. But at Pacific Woolen [*Morikubo-san's business*]*—there were three people who own its shares. And at Sato's the children were not big yet, so a person named [Tadao] Miura became the manager and watched over it. Afterwards, Sato's eldest son came home from America [U.S. Mainland] and (he took over).*
- MK: What about Morikubo?
- TH: He was—I heard that he had a child brought by his second wife. So the two of them were working.
- MK: How was business after the war?
- TH: Do you mean my business?
- MK: Yes.
- TH: Well, after the war, the stevedores had a strike, 1949 strike, and business fell. But since it was something that I did by myself, I hadn't relied on a manager or anything, it was fairly easy. And after a short while the Korean War started. After that it picked up and continued. Then the Ala Moana Center was built and Sato's moved over there.
- MK: That was about 1960 that he moved, wasn't it?
- TH: Yes. After that I moved from Iwilei.

END OF INTERVIEW